something more (something real)

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by cardans

Summary

Later, when Dream checks Twitter in the safety of his own bed, he sees the photo of George and Sapnap. He sees his hoodie on full show, broadcasted like a damn trophy. Then, after, he sees the video. He sees himself, looking past the camera, dazed and awestruck and positively in love.

He reads the replies to the tweets. Some are ooh-ing and aww-ing over Sapnap, even though he has drool down his chin and crust in his eyes. Some are fawning over George's hoodie because they know, but that's not even the worst part. The worst part is the response to the video. The worst part is every single reply that says *he's so whipped*; that says *he's in love*.

Stupid, stupid, stupid.

He's so fucking stupid.

dream has always liked george, even when there were screens and oceans separating them. that crush is nothing compared to the way he felt after george moved to florida. dream saw him in person, and he fell. so, so hard. it's been months, and dream still hasn't hit the ground.

i gotta be honest, this was pure self indulgence, but i thought some of y'all might want to indulge with me. hope you enjoy!

p.s. if u squint this is maybe-kinda-sorta a sequel to "late nights (early morning)"

See the end of the work for more notes

"We love you guys, bye!"

He raids Sapnap with a click of his finger and sees the stream thumbnail staring back at him. It's him and George with open mouths, his in a victorious smile and George's in an angry shout.

After all this time, it's still jarring to see his face on the screen.

He face-revealed a few months ago, the day George came and moved in with them for good, yet he still isn't used to it. He's not used to people pointing out the freckles on his cheeks, or the tousle of his hair, or even the greenness of his eyes. He looks at his Twitter timeline and he sees little icons of himself, caught in half-smiles and wheezing laughs and intense stare-downs.

George makes it better, though.

"We don't always have to do facecam, you know," George tells him, drawing his knees to his chest. His gaming chair spins beneath him. Dream grabs the armrest to still it.

"I know," he says. "But it's a main channel stream, and they're, like, obsessed with you. I don't want to deprive them of their George content."

George laughs. "Obsessed? With me?"

"You."

He laughs again, like this is the funniest thing in the world, like he doesn't have millions of people captivated with his fluffy hair and perfect smile. Dream is no exception. He's as entranced by George as the rest of them, perhaps even more so. Like ignited paper, George curls around him, leaving him covered in soot and smoke and reeling from the effects.

"-obsessed with."

Dream blinks. "Huh?"

"I said that you're the one they're obsessed with. It's been months since I've seen anyone without your face as the profile picture. Actually no—I've seen *one*, and that was probably your stan account."

"I don't have a stan account."

"It's okay, Dream. You can tell me you're obsessed with me, too," George says, looking up at him through his lashes. Dream's brain short circuits.

Soot.

Smoke.

Reeling.

"You're right, I am," Dream says. He sets his headphones aside and stands, then grabs George by the hands and hauls him up. "C'mon, we gotta get stuff ready for dinner. Sapnap'll be pissed if he ends stream and there's nothing ready."

"Ooo, we wouldn't want Sappy-nappy to be mad."

"Oh, shut up."

It wasn't always like this.

Or maybe it was – the lines get blurred sometimes.

Dream and George's first meeting was barely anything at all. Just a message exchanged from Dream to George, asking for help coding a project. George ignored him, of course, and when their paths crossed a few years later, it felt like fate. Like they were meant to be friends – partners.

Perhaps he always liked George. Perhaps it was inevitable from the start.

But the fans... They made it worse.

They obsessed over flirty one-liners and joking jabs. They made edits of them. Playlists. Art. Fanfics. They turned inches into miles, made anything and everything about Dream and George and DNF. They found hidden meanings in rambled words and reminisced memories.

Dream didn't even search for it. All he had to do was watch.

The world fell in love with George. They fell for his cackling laughter and his shining eyes, and somewhere along the line, Dream did, too. It's easy to fall in love with someone when they're always just a call away, always there to talk to and look at and laugh with.

Then George came to Florida, and Dream finally saw all the things the fuzzy webcam and tinny mic didn't pick up. He saw his messy morning hair, and his favorite recipes, and the way he makes his tea in the evening.

And Dream-

Dream cracked into pieces.

He'd watched Tommy's vlog a dozen times the day it first came out, kept high-speed scrubbing to each segment of George with his black mask, his flushed cheeks. And when he finished obsessing over that, he moved to Twitter, saw clip after clip of George spreading his arms for Tommy; accepting a piggyback ride from Wilbur; looking up at the camera on the bus.

Dream thought he was ready. He thought he knew what he was getting himself into. *Pretty privilege*, he'd said, all those months ago. He doesn't know if he should consider himself a prophet or a fool. Nothing could've prepared him for the accessibility that came with George moving to Florida – not Discord server sleepovers or private calls or even DNF compilations on Youtube.

Dream no longer has to pull up Discord or Facetime whenever he wants to talk. He can just knock on George's door, or pull him aside, or yell through the fucking walls. Because George is *here*. In Florida, in arms reach. And it's not a vacation, and it's not a temporary stay. It's forever. It's *home*.

It's different now. The lack of distance changed their dynamic, but even so, some things still stayed

the same. George is still one of his best friends, and they still stream all the time, and DNF is still a joke – a stupid bit that they sometimes play into to get the fans' attention; to rile them up.

To show Dream what could be, but isn't.

"Garbage day tomorrow," Sapnap says, flipping through channels with a dazed look on his face. Taco Thursday left them full and tired, with Sapnap more tired than both Dream and George combined. Punz and him played thirteen hours of *Valorant* – Dream's surprised he's still able to open his eyes.

"Is that your way of telling me you're gonna put the cans out tonight?"

Sapnap switches to a Survivor rerun. "No, that's my way of telling you to get Lover Boy to do it."

(The fans can say whatever they want about a Texas education. Sapnap has always been smart, has always been able to see between the lines. Right now, though, it seems more like he's reading straight from the page. *He knows*, *he knows*, *he knows*.)

As if on cue, George walks into the living room.

"Get Lover Boy to do what?" George asks as he passes, fresh out of the shower. He takes the spot between Dream and Sapnap on the couch. It's a small couch, barely big enough to fit two people, much less an entire additional body. George sits with a leg overlapping Dream's, hitched over his thigh like it's nothing.

(That surprised Dream, too – just how *touchy* George is. Everyone expected Dream to be the touchy one and yeah, he *is* touchy, but George is relentless. Always insists on grabbing t-shirts and combing hair and linking pinkies. Somehow, Dream doesn't think he minds.)

"Put out the garbage cans," Sapnap answers, dropping the remote in George's lap immediately. He tips his head back against the couch, finally allowing his eyes to fall shut. "It's your week to do it."

"I'm pretty sure I did it last week," George argues, but by then Sapnap is already snoring, mouth open and leaking. "Right, Dream? Didn't I do it last week?"

He turns to Dream, and Dream cannot look him in the eyes right now, so he looks anywhere but. He looks at George's hair (dark and shining; sticking up in spikes all over his head), and his pajama pants (fuzzy; skull and crossbones printed), his hoodie (neon green; smiley face stitched in the front, a size too big).

"Maybe, I don't—Is that my hoodie?" Dream asks, even though he knows the answer, knows that George is sitting there, in his hoodie, in his *clothes*.

Desperately, Dream tries to convince himself that it's not a big deal. George wears his merch all the time. When he still lived in England, Dream used to pay express shipping just to ensure George had every item first. He sent him Manhunt shirts, bucket hats, and smile hoodies. But none of those were ever in green. George said there was no point, said he looked terrible in yellow-greens. But this—

This isn't terrible at all.

George doesn't try to deny it. "I ran out of clean clothes," he answers. He pulls out his phone after, snaps a selfie of him and a sleeping Sapnap, then turns the camera towards Dream. "Say hi, Dream."

Dream still hasn't recovered. George is in his clothes. In arm's reach.

"Hi," he finally says, because he thinks he can, because he thinks hi is safe and natural and not at all exposing the sudden lurch in his chest. The words feel like cotton in his mouth anyway.

Later, when Dream checks Twitter in the safety of his own bed, he sees the photo of George and Sapnap. He sees his hoodie on full show, broadcasted like a damn trophy. Then, after, he sees the video. He sees himself, looking past the camera, dazed and awestruck and positively in love.

He reads the replies to the tweets. Some are ooh-ing and aww-ing over Sapnap, even though he has drool down his chin and crust in his eyes. Some are fawning over George's hoodie because they *know*, but that's not even the worst part. The worst part is the response to the video. The worst part is every single reply that says *he's so whipped*; that says *he's in love*.

Stupid, stupid, stupid.

He's so fucking stupid.

"What are you thinking, Dream? Uruguay or Argentina?"

Dream turns his attention to the screen, letting his eyes pass over stretching roads and blurred road signs. He hums, "Uruguay."

George clicks Uruguay at the bottom of the map. The screen lights his face bright green in the dark room. They're in George's room today, streaming *Geoguessr* on his alt. It's only midnight, but George wanted to crank a stream out before it got too late. Said he wanted to be nice to the west coast fans, or something. Dream didn't know how to tell him that the west and east coasts are enemies, so instead he rolled his gaming chair into George's room and joined him for the stream. They're Grogington now, a collective unit that's been absolutely dominating, even in South America.

"You're such a sweat," George says.

"I'm a sweat? You're the one that refuses to play anything but one minute chess games!"

"Oh my god, stop changing the subject. We're not even talking about chess. That's, like, a fallacy or something."

Dream laughs. "A fallacy? Wow, big words coming from the comp-sci major."

The facecam isn't even on, yet George still pouts, all jutted lip and big-eyed. "You're hurting my feelings," he says, swiveling his chair towards Dream. George's eyes are bright, and his mouth keeps twitching, like he's holding back a smile. When they're close like this, Dream can see every freckle, all the tiny imperfections the camera never catches. They don't feel like imperfections, though. They just feel like George. They feel like late night conversations and sleep calls and sprawling laughter, swirling in his head and through his thoughts and intertwining themselves into every part of his day.

"I'm *hurting your feelings?*" he repeats, and he can hear his facade cracking in all the wrong places. He can hear the softness in his voice, the endearment. The words aren't as quick and teasing as they should be. They're quiet, and slow, and they sound like everything Dream's been trying to avoid; like thumping hearts and lingering touches and stolen hoodies.

"Yeah, you are. Now you have to win this round to make it up to me." George stops looking at

him, and maybe that's why Dream suddenly feels like he can think again.

He starts clicking through the street as George leans back in his chair, as he slides his feet across Dream's lap.

Touchy, touchy, touchy, Dream thinks, and misclicks in the final round of Geoguessr.

"Looks like I lost," he says, sliding the mouse back over to George.

"I think you did it on purpose."

Dream pokes his tongue in his cheek, shrugging. "Well you can't prove it, so," he says, hand settling over George's ankle, light and loose. There's a friendship anklet there. He twists it around his finger absently, feels the weight of the thread around his own ankle. Blue, yellow, and orange, like stretching skies and shining suns.

Shows that you're property of Florida, Drista had said when she made it. So you never forget where home is. She gave one to each of them – Dream, Sapnap, and George. Patches has one, too, hidden in a junk drawer somewhere.

"Chat, what do you think? Do you think Dream lost on purpose? Type one if yes, and two if no." George opens the chat in full screen so they can see the numbers fly in.

Dream scoffs. "You know that's not fair. They're your chat. They're obviously gonna vote with you," he says, but even so, he watches the chat closely. He sees *Clay* pass by a few times, and questions, and lots of *DNF*'s, because apparently George's mods unblocked the word.

"I don't know, I'm seeing a lot of twos. Guess my chat likes you more than you thought."

"Really? Because I'm just seeing a lot of questions," Dream says, leaning forward in his chair. "Dream, what's your favorite color? Take a guess. Favorite GOT character? Tyrion Lannister. George likes Littlefinger, obviously."

"'Obviously,'" George mocks. "Chat's going by too fast. Ask the questions on Twitter. Hashtag ask George."

"No- Hashtag ask DNF."

There was no stopping the words. Usually there's a buffer between his mind and his mouth, something that tells him to stop, to slow down, but that buffer disappeared with his cracking facade, with the shrinking space between them.

He hears George's breath hitch. A beat too late, George says, "Pull it up on your phone." Dream does as he's told, starts scrolling through #askDNF. There's already five thousand tweets, rising by the second. "Ask me a question, Dream."

"What movie would you want to live in?" he reads off, but he already knows the answer. He says, "Harry Potter," at the same time as George, much to George's chagrin.

George shifts in his seat, hiding behind the collar of his hoodie, and it's a move he's seen George make thousands of times before, through shitty webcams and low-quality streams. George wrinkles his nose, flush creeping up from his neck, coloring him pink and red all over. Dream has never noticed the blush before, but it must've always been there, as solid and real as George himself.

"You're so easy," Dream teases.

George glowers at him, pulling the neck of his hoodie over his mouth. When he speaks, it's muffled. "I'm not easy, you're—"

"I'm what?"

"You're an idiot," George finishes, far too quickly to be anything but a bluff. "Next question."

Dream pouts at the lie, then moves on. "What's the stupidest thing you've ever done?"

"Moved to Florida."

Dream's thumb traces circles on George's ankle slowly, soft as a feather. He looks at George, at the bunched-up hoodie and the embarrassed flush on his pink, pink cheeks. "Yeah?"

The fabric falls beneath George's chin. "Yeah," he says. His eyes are big, and bottomless, and Dream can see himself falling so easily. He can see himself plummeting into the darkness with the wind whistling around him, hands clawing at nothing but empty air and George.

He flexes and curls his fingers. They pass through the air, and then hit George.

Dream swallows.

"GNFlover123 wants to know if you're still liking Florida," he finally says. "Guess we know the answer to that one."

George rolls his eyes, and it seems they've returned to where they were before. "Oh, hush. Yes, GNFlover123, I *am* enjoying Florida. It's home. It just feels like I'm home."

Dream looks at George, and he feels like he's home, too.

Things change after the *Geoguessr* stream.

Or maybe not things. Maybe it's Dream that changes.

He's unsure if it's really a change. It feels more like it's been there all along. The monster under the bed, watching and studying and waiting for the right time to pounce.

There was a pillow over his head before, a bedskirt hanging over the mattress. It hid everything from sight. Then the pillow was torn off, and the light was turned on, and he was left shocked and blindsided.

He shouldn't be blindsided.

He knows how he feels about George – he's always known. But those things were private. They were *his*. He could live with the feelings because they were hopeless, because they were passing thoughts in a super-sped world. Then George came to Florida, and it was hard, but he would've gotten used to it. He would have. For George, he would have.

But the fans picked up on it too quickly. They saw his failures and his slip-ups, his too-soft words and faraway gazes.

He checks indirects on Twitter after the stream, finds himself ten tweets deep into a thread that live-tweeted the entire thing. He screenshots the worst tweets so that he can gloom over them without fear of accidentally pressing like.

There's "is it just me or are they being more affectionate than usual?" and "not to be a dnf truther on main but they're like... rly gay. like Really Gay," which are sort of worrying, but they're nothing compared to second to last tweet in the thread, the one that makes a cold sweat break out at the base of his neck.

"why do i feel like i'm intruding?" it asks in small, unassuming letters.

The camera wasn't even fucking on, and the chat still thought they were intruding. Is Dream that obvious?

He tells himself no. He tells himself that the fans are only seeing what they want to see, that they're making a story out of nothing. He tries to grasp at the rational thoughts, but they fall through his fingers like sand, leaving him with nothing but smoldering emotion and harsh realizations.

The fans *aren't* just making things up. They're picking up the DNF crumbs that George and Dream have so carefully planted, all to give them something to look for, to gush over. They're doing what's expected of them. It's *Dream* that's not playing his role right. He's the one who's forgotten his place. He's supposed to be the flirty streamer, not the pining best friend. He's supposed to be faking it, but instead he let himself get caught up in the moment, and he's suffering because of it.

He can be in love with George. He *has* been in love with George. But he can't be doing this – he can't be letting himself think that there's more to DNF than fake flirting. Because there's *not*. There's Dream, and there's George, and there's DNF for the cameras. And that's it.

As he falls asleep, he tells himself this again. And again. And again.

It never seems to set in.

"Hey, Reyna, can you try not sucking ass?"

Sapnap's chat fills with *TOXIC-NAP* and angry emotes.

"Chat, shut up. I'm not being toxic," Sapnap says, and Dream doesn't have to see his face to know he's annoyed. "Punz, can you buy?"

"He is being a little toxic," George says.

"Yeah, maybe. He did say it into all-speak," Dream agrees, playing with a rogue 13 MIL coin on his desk. It spins, then clatters to a stop. The noise is entirely drowned out by Sapnap's post-death scream. It's been his last game for the past five games, and it's really showing. Sapnap's always had a short fuse, and playing Valorant while hungry only makes it worse. They were meant to get dinner an hour ago, but then Sapnap started practicing Omen, and he kept losing, and Punz said they couldn't end on a loss. At first, Dream was just there to spam in chat that they were hungry, but that got old fast, so now he and George are here, in Dream's room, watching as Sapnap dies over and over.

"Sapnap, will you go to prom with me?" the text-to-speech robot asks. Dream makes a face, and finishes off the glass of water in front of him.

"Um," Sapnap starts, discomfort clear in his voice, "I don't know. Probably not."

"His donos are so bad," George says. He picks the coin up from where it dropped and begins tossing it through the air. "He's been asked to go to prom, like, three times in this stream alone."

Dream catches the coin smile-side up, and presses it into George's open palm. "To be fair, two of those offers were from Punz."

"Has the house changed since George moved in?"

Sapnap hums as he snipes a Sage. "Yeah, it's changed a ton. Dream and I can't have sex in the living room anymore, and George walks around naked all the time. Like, I can't go more than two seconds without seeing his bare ass right in front of my face. But it's okay, it's pretty cute- Oh my god, can this Phoenix do his fucking job?"

George starts spamming chat before Dream can even blink, bypassing Slow Mode.

dreamwastaken: omg

dreamwastaken: shut up

dreamwastaken: that's supposed to be our secret

Then, as an afterthought, he sends, this is george, btw:]

"GEORGE!" Sapnap shouts, and the chat goes crazy.

purp13d: MY LEFT EAR

ripmcsg: BUT IT'S DREAMS ACCOUNT???

bloxburg: DEE EN EFF CONFIRMED

"Chat, you guys are so dumb. They're literally on a date right now, of course he's on Dream's account," Sapnap tells them. "They left me home alone. What should I do, chat? Should I take Patches and make a run for it? She's right next to me, so I totally could."

Dream runs a hand through his hair. "He's enabling them. They're gonna think he's serious."

"I think he is. We're definitely on a date right now, Dream," George says, obnoxiously pokerfaced. His composure breaks as he reaches out. "Wait, hold still. You have an eyelash." George knocks it off his cheek and into the air.

Dream pouts. "Now I can't make a wish."

"What could you have to wish for? Obviously, you're a millionaire."

"Oh, come on now. That's a low blow, and you know it."

George's lips form a familiar smile. High in the cheeks and tight in the mouth, the one he always does when he's trying to play innocent. "What? I'm being serious," he claims and, upon seeing Dream's look, adds, "Okay, fine. What would you wish for, then?"

"A date."

George laughs, high and sharp. Unnatural. "With who?"

"You. Who else?"

"And you blame Sapnap for enabling them," he says, shaking his head, like he can't quite believe it.

Dream should stop. He should stop, and take a step back. Let the dust settle. He's pandering now, for no one but himself. It's stupid, and it's useless, and it'll only end in pain.

But then George smiles at him, victorious and knowing, and Dream wants nothing more than to prove him wrong.

He inhales, and chooses his heart over his head.

"I'm not enabling them." The words are soft, too fucking soft. He tries to find some way to neutralize the sweetness in his voice, to cut the sugar by half, and comes up short. So instead he watches George closely, and waits for a beat before saying, "Really, I'm not."

George's smile falters, but it doesn't fall. "What are you doing then, Dream?" he asks, and there's still a lilt to his words, a hint of playfulness. An open door, for Dream to take if he chooses. A way out.

But that door has been closed since George moved to Florida.

Since their first sleep call.

Since they met on MunchyMC.

It was always going to end like this. His heart in his throat, a confession on his tongue. George's eyes on him, and his eyes on George. Putting an end to the watching and waiting, the pushing and pulling.

Confronting this thing between them head-on, once and for all.

"I'm being serious."

George rolls his eyes, and uses Dream's armrest to drag his chair back and forth across the floor. Closer, then further. Pushing out, pulling in. "No, you're not."

"I am," he says, and takes George's hand on the pull, keeping him close.

The smile finally drops, but George doesn't pull back, or push away. "You're *not* serious. You're just playing, Dream. You're always just playing," he says, troubled.

"Well, I'm not playing now."

Sapnap's stream fades to background gunfire as George asks, "What does that even mean? What do you mean when you say that? Do you even *know*?"

"Of course I know," Dream answers, fast. Then, soft, he repeats, "I know."

"Then what is it, Dream?" George's mouth barely moves around the words, more hidden than not.

"I want to go on a date with you," he first says, but that's not right. "I want to date you."

The way George is looking at him makes him feel spread thin and see-through.

"If you're joking," George says slowly, "stop. It's not funny." He draws his hand away, and Dream links their pinkies to keep the connection.

"Not joking. 'm- I'm not joking. Promise, I'm not joking. I want- you know what I want, George."

"I don't," he says, lips pressed in a thin line.

The words fall like water. "You, George. Always you."

"I-" There's a flash of red as George wets his lip. He looks down at their linked pinkies, then back up at Dream. "If you're *serious*-"

"I am."

George shoots him a look, and Dream shuts up. "If you're serious," he says again, "then I think I know. I think I've always known."

"But you never said-"

"Cause I never knew if it was real," George admits, and laces their fingers together. "You're-you're hard to read, Dream."

"I'm hard to read?" he asks, brows furrowed. "No, no. If anyone's hard to read, it's *you*. You almost never pander, but when you do, it's full force."

George raises a brow, and that gorgeous, victorious smile creeps back onto his face. "Oh yeah? Tell me how. Cite your sources, Dream."

"Cite my sources?" He laughs, incredulous. Then, "Okay, fine. First, you texted my mom saying you were my boyfriend. She sat me down to have the sex talk. I'm twenty-one, George, getting the sex talk from my mom. Then that yeah when we did your first alt stream. What even was that?"

George's cheeks have grown an alarming shade of red as he laughs, but Dream is sure he can get redder.

"Oh, and we can't forget about you *ignoring* me the first time I messaged you," he says pointedly.

"You literally can't hold that against me."

"What about that hoodie, then? Dream's hoodie? The one you ordered *behind my back* and sprayed with cologne that you don't even wear?"

George uses his free hand to cover his mouth. "Oh my god, stop," he says, out of breath and redpink all over.

"Make me."

Maybe he shouldn't have challenged George. Maybe he shouldn't have pushed when George was already so close to the edge and had nothing more to lose.

But what's done is done, and George is kissing him before he can take the challenge back. It's everything he's ever wanted; it's nothing like he expected. Dream places a hand on the desk as he presses in closer, closer to George and his fiery cheeks and his smug lips.

Their noses bump. Dream's hand slips. Into the mouse, and off the desk. The cord goes taut around his empty water glass, tears from his monitor, and sends the glass to the floor with a sick shatter. They separate with wide eyes and parted lips.

Sapnap shouts his name through the wall.

A second later, the crash and the yell are echoed through the monitor in front of them. Dream hears

the crash, and Sapnap's yell, and Punz asking if Dream is okay.

His phone buzzes on his desk.

George answers it with a hesitant finger.

"Dude, are you good? My *chat* heard that crash," Sapnap says, and the delayed stream repeats it moments after.

"We're fine. Patches just—she knocked something over," he lies, and George shakes his head wildly, mouthing something Dream can't read. Not because it's unclear, but because Dream isn't really paying attention to words at all. He's more focused on George's mouth, on his red, red lips. Dream's sure those can get redder, too.

"That's weird," Sapnap says with a hum, and Dream knows he's fucked up, "because she's literally sitting in my lap right now, so..."

George grimaces, and slides the phone closer to himself. "Sapnap?"

"Yes, Gogy?"

"Shut up."

George hangs up the phone, and Sapnap cackles through the monitor.

"I've *been* telling y'all that Dream's an idiot, and that just confirmed it," Sapnap brags, snickering to himself as he knifes a Killjoy.

"Dream's an idiot, confirmed," a dono says.

"Dream's an idiot, confirmed," Sapnap says back.

George pulls his hand in close. "Dream's an idiot, confirmed," he echoes, smiling.

Dream returns the smile, and steals another kiss.

He's an idiot, confirmed.

End Notes

mwah kudos and comments are always appreciated <3

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